



Ecclesiastical Building Disuse & Identity: The Case of Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church –Youth Perspective

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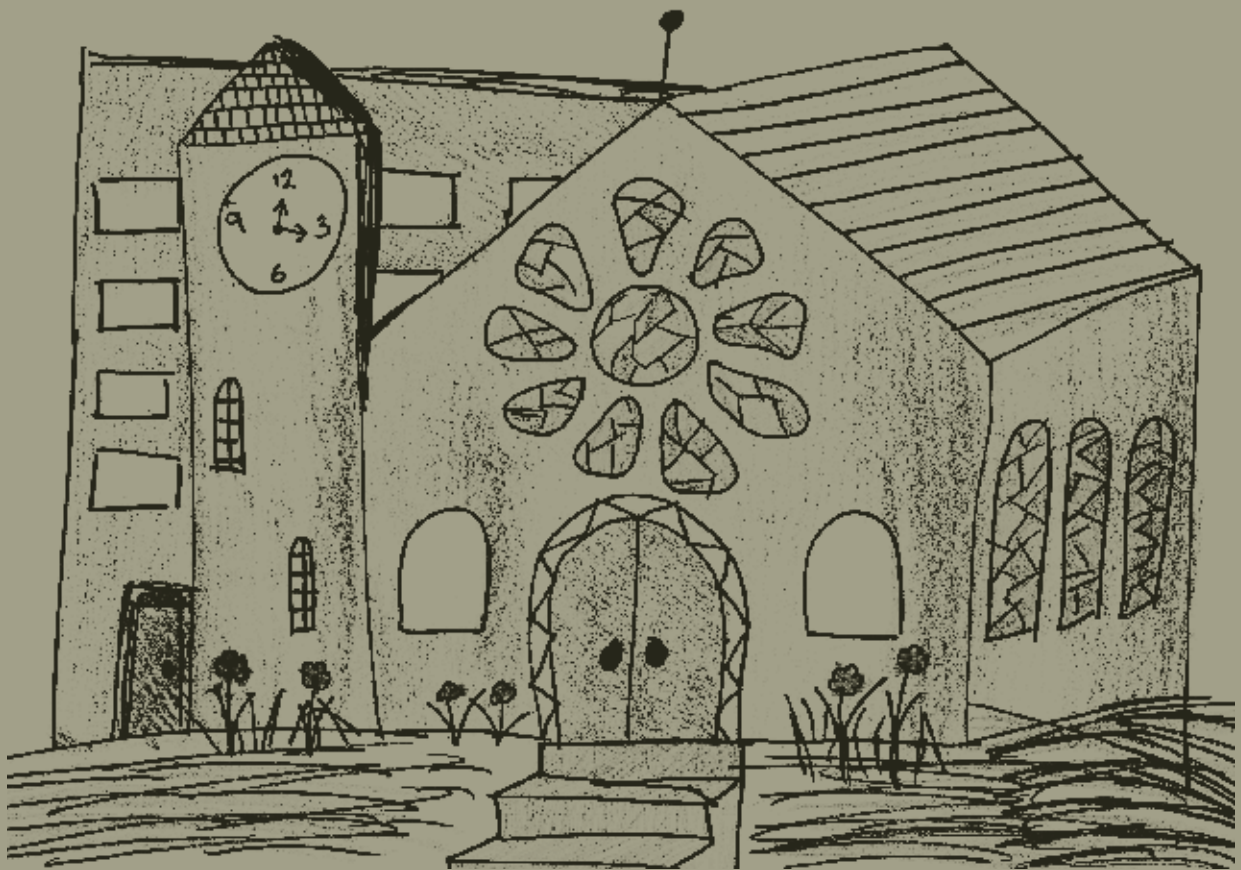
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Ecclesiastical Building Disuse & Identity:
*The Case of Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church –
Youth Perspective*



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1.0 Project Introduction

Church buildings constitute an important feature of the UK landscape, particularly in Northern Ireland, challenged as it has been by issues of identity. In the capital city of Belfast, church buildings often provide both stability and security of local identity (Brown & Perkins, 1992). The visual impacts of church architecture but equally their siting have strongly influenced the shaping of the built environment, which in Northern Ireland has been tied to the sense of identity, attachment and belonging within local communities (Mitchell, 2006). Since the introduction of the peace process in 1998, however, settlement patterns within the city have altered. This has resulted in many churches finding themselves situated in an opposing community and hence abandoned.

As a consequence of the declining congregation and its location at a major interface area, the church has lain empty since its closure in 1982. Since then, it has suffered from extensive physical degradation and is currently in a parlous condition (BBPT, 2010).

The Carlisle Memorial Methodist church is among 93 sites around the world which is included in the *Worlds Monument Fund watch list*. The watch list is published every two years and aims to protect sites of cultural or architectural importance which are at risk because of neglect, vandalism, conflict or disaster. The Carlisle Memorial Methodist church is the first and only building in Belfast to be placed on the 2010 watch list.

In the capital city of Belfast, church buildings often provide both stability and security of local identity.

Brown & Perkins, 1992

Through a detailed case study of a disused Methodist church, set in an interface area this study funded by the RIBA Research Trust Award, investigated and aimed to establish the building's influence on local identity and place attachment from a youth perspective aged 11-14. Research by Graham et al (2009) identified that virtually no earlier research has been conducted on the views of young people and their environment; highlighting the need for further engagement with this age group. This particular study attempted to answer a number of key questions such as: (1) what are the implications of disused religious spaces on local communities? (2) what happens to local identity when a religious space becomes inhabited by another tradition? and (3) can a renewed understanding of such a building, through its spatial experience, encourage a greater understanding of other religions and help find a way for disused space to, once again, play a viable part in the local community as a shared heritage resource?

The selected building, Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church, is located on the edge of inner-city Belfast and is considered by many to be a landmark building, serving as a gateway to North Belfast. Designed in the Gothic revival style by noted architect W.H Lynn, the church housed one of the largest Methodist congregations in Belfast.

Since being placed on the watch list, interest in the building has increased and under the direction of a local cross community charity, the Belfast Building Preservation Trust (BBPT), the process of restoring and developing a sustainable re-use option for the church building has begun.

This report will first provide a detailed account of this building's historical and contextual significance, documenting its subsequent demise. Then, the social and political challenges facing the location of this building will be highlighted. The youth focused methodological approach adopted for this study will be explained, followed by an analysis of youth drawings and oral accounts of the building. Finally the key findings of the study will be discussed establishing the extent to which this building impacts on local youth identity. The intended beneficiaries of this report will include academics, policy makers, community groups and historians. The findings will contribute to an existing body of knowledge that can help determine the redevelopment potential of Carlisle Memorial Church thereby helping to transform the city of Belfast into an integrated environment where individuality can be respected and diversity celebrated, in an inclusive manner (Darby & Knox, 2004). Lessons obtained from this study may be used as a strategic foundation for the future design and development of religious spaces in contested cities facing similar issues.

2.0 Carlisle Memorial Church

Carlisle Memorial Methodist church is a distinguished building constructed at the sole expense of Alderman James Carlisle in memory of his only son (Jameson, 1946). The building consists of a church, erected in 1875-6, and an adjoining Sunday school erected in 1888-9 (*Figure 1 and 2*). These two buildings were connected by a cloister, over which was the church parlor. The church was named after Lord Carlisle, Viceroy of Ireland, and Belfast builder Alderman James Carlisle (*Figure 3*) (BBPT, 2009).



Figure 1
Carlisle Memorial Church 1946
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012

2.1
Historical Context

Details of the early life of James Carlisle are lacking but it is certain that he was born in County Londonderry in 1810 to a very poor family. As a young man he became a carpenter and moved to Belfast in search for work. Early in his career he entered the building trade and, following his relocation to Belfast in the late 1830s, he was quick to prosper in the expanding Victorian city. His yard is recorded in the Street Directory of 1840 at 85 Donegall Street, with his house recorded as 35 Great Patrick Street (Hall Black Douglas, 2011).

Carlisle was a Methodist, an expanding denomination which expanded in line with Belfast’s growing population throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to Carlisle Memorial, the main Methodist Church was the classical building at Donegall Square East, the façade of which has been retained as part of the Ulster Bank. James Carlisle was the contractor for the church, and also for Crumlin Road Courthouse (Hall Black Douglas, 2011).

Clearly possessed of considerable entrepreneurial flair, in the early 1850s Carlisle expanded his interests into the fast-developing flax spinning industry, entering into partnership with Philip Johnston to form Brookfield Linen Co., of which he was to remain the Chairman until the end of his life. Carlisle became wealthy, and was a prominent figure in Belfast civic life in the mid nineteenth century. He became a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Town Council and Alderman for Dock Ward. He declined an offer to stand for Mayor. James Carlisle also features prominently in the history of Methodist College having acquired and bequeathed the land for its construction (Hall Black Douglas, 2011).

As his business career prospered, he also married into a well known Belfast family. His marriage to Anne Hall was blessed with a daughter, Mary, who was born in 1840 and a son, James Henry Carlisle, born in 1852.

Unfortunately tragedy struck the family when James Carlisle lost both his children. His son James Henry Carlisle, had an early and tragic death in 1870, at 18 years of age. Mary Carlisle then died shortly after in 1874. After these tragic deaths, the bereaved parent, James and Anne Carlisle, began to consider a memorial that would perpetuate the memory of their children (Jameson, 1946).

According to Jameson (1946) it was probable that when the project was first discussed the question of a suitable site was carefully considered. The town, at that time, had begun to grow in most directions, but its advance along the now known Antrim road had not been so marked (Jameson, 1946). The area however was becoming more prosperous as wealthier classes began to move out of the city centre to luxurious terraces located on the Crumlin and Antrim Roads. *Figure 4 and 5* show the Carlisle Circus area before (1830) and after (2005) the church building was constructed.

After a worthy site was secured on a corner of Carlisle Circus the building was commenced in 1875, the architect being W.H. Lynn and the builder James Henry. William Henry Lynn was an Irish born architect who had an office both in Belfast and in the North of England (*Figure 6*). He was an influential architect with regards to the city of Belfast with his designs for Queens University Lanyon Building, Bank building and Campbell College.



Figure 2
The School Building 1896
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012



Figure 3 (above)
James Carlisle
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012

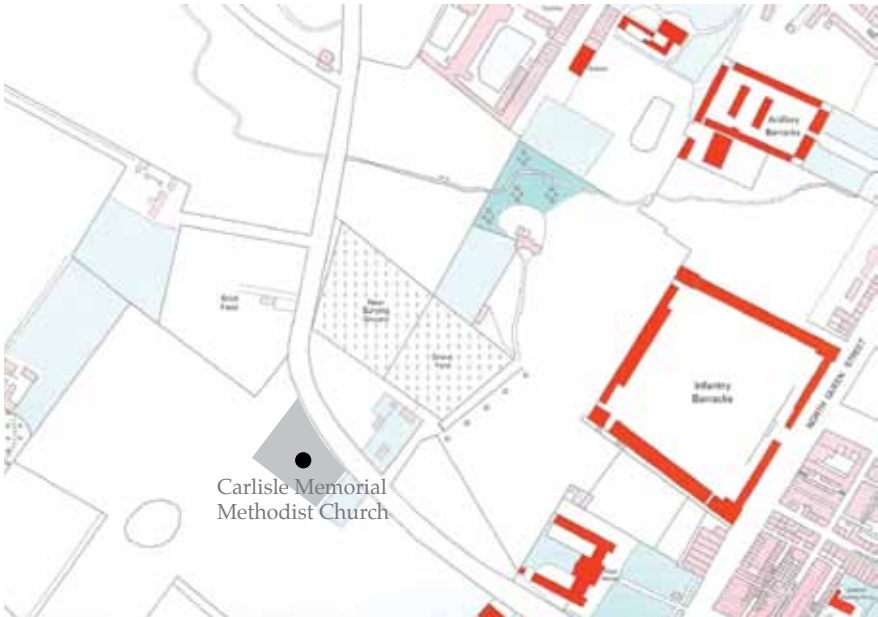


Figure 4 (above)
Belfast Map 1830
Copyright 2003 Royal Irish Academy

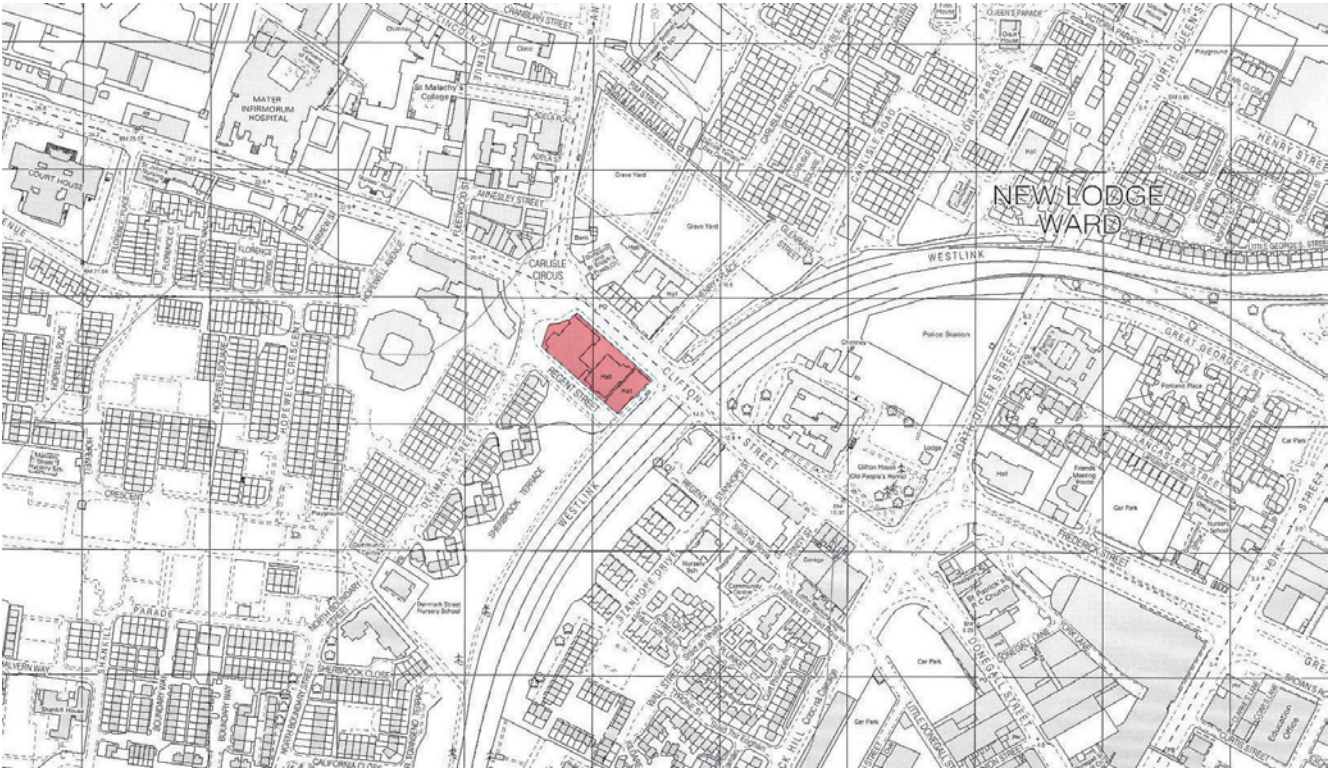


Figure 5 (below)
Belfast Map 2005
Copyright Irish Historic Town Atlas 2005

The church took slightly over a year to complete, from March 1875, until the last stone was laid by Mrs Carlisle on the 11th of May, 1876, as is recorded by an inscription over the inside of the entrance door. The next day the church was officially opened and the cover of the first hymn booklet can be viewed in *figure 8*. The first minister directly serving of the church was Reverend Joseph McKay (*figure 7*). The Reverend, Gervase Smith M.A., the President of the conference held in the church that year, pronounced the church to be ‘the most perfect Methodist structure within the realm of Great Britain and Ireland’. James Carlisle made the following statement on that day as he handed over the building:

This is a memorial church to my son, who was as dear to me as life. When I parted with him I thought I parted with everything else. But it did not rest there. I had to meet much more than that. I next lost an only daughter whom I loved equally dear, and following in that course I next lost a grandchild. This day to me is painful. I cannot help referring to that ordeal that I was called upon to pass through during the past week. I feel that I can say little more than to present this church as a memorial of the dead. The object which my wife and I had in view in erecting this church was that it might be dedicated to the Glory of God and the best interests of man. If that is accomplished, and I trust and believe that it will be accomplished, then our object will be accomplished. I beg to present the trust deed of the building, free from all head rent, or any encumbrance of any kind.

Jameson, 1946

The Carlisle Memorial Church was described by Larmour (1987) as a ‘Gothic Revival church in Early English style, excellent in composition and in details and is well proportioned with a tower and rich spire on a really grand scale’. These views were however not shared by all as Brett (1985) described the church ‘to be amongst the architects least happy works, and must have a fighting claim to be Belfast’s ugliest church’. Despite the negative reactions, the church was considered to an ‘important historical landmark that could do much to lift the fortunes of the surrounding area’ (Bret, 1985).

Figure 8 (right)
Hymn sheet used at first church service
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012

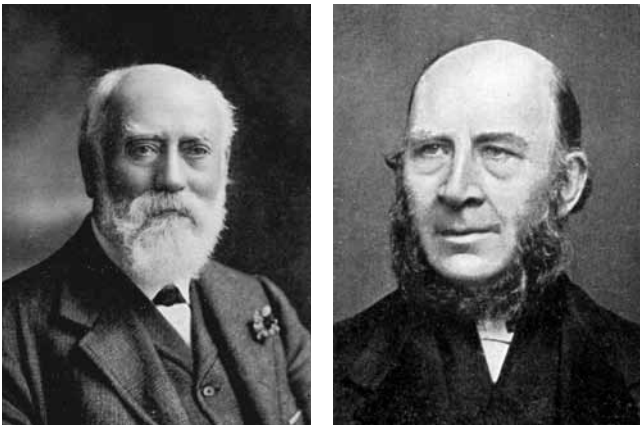
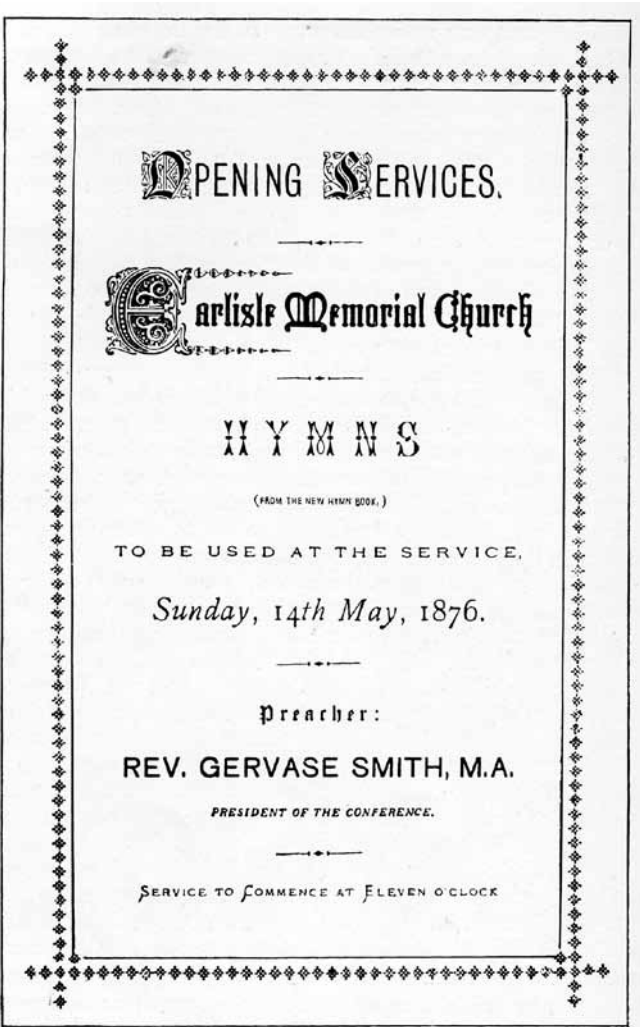


Figure 6
William Lynn (Architect)
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012

Figure 7
Reverend Joseph McKay, First minister of the church 1876-1879
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012



2.2
Description of the Building

The church is a double height Gothic Revival church, constructed of Armagh limestone and pink Dundonald sandstone. The church is cruciform on plan, aligned NE-SW with full height side aisles and tall three-stage tower with spire to the north corner (Hall Black Douglas, 2011). The church building measures approximately 815m² and the interior comprises nave and side aisles supported on clustered colonnettes.

The roof of the building is formed from three main pitched sections with a slate covering. At eaves level, parapet walls have been adopted with gutter lines located behind them. The roof construction consists of traditional cut rafters, supported on timber purlins and trusses. Internally the arched bottom boom of the trusses support a pannelled barrel vault ceiling making a particularly interesting architectural detail (*Figure 9, 10, 11 and 12*). Internally, the ground floor is formed with timber joists, spanning between tassel walls. Small areas of solid floor exist along with the original aisles of the church (Doran Consulting, 2011) (*Figure 12*).



Figure 9 & 10
The Chancel, 1985 and the Church interior, 1896
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012





Figure 11 (left)
The Chancel from Transept 1896
Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012

Figure 12 (below)
Church Interior, 2011

Figure 13 (page opposite, right)
Text remaining in Chancel



Internally, the chancel features as one of the most prominent areas. In Jameson's (1946) account of the building it is documented that behind the communion table was a beautiful mural decoration of glit floral and geometrical design in three parts. The centre panel was formed around a Dove with an olive branch; on the left panel the letter Alpha was evident and on the right panel the letter Omega was shown. Above was a small panel of symbolic flowers and fruits. Across these panels ran the text: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'. Above the mural panels it read: 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lords death till He come'. Positioned above the communion table, and all that remains today of the text includes 'This do in remembrance of me' (Figure 13).

The chancel roof, which is badly damaged today, was originally painted blue with applied gilt stars (Figure 14).

The great east or chancel window was a memorial to the Carlisle family and according to Jameson (1946) probably provided more food for meditation than any other portion of the sanctuary. On a great background of floral and geometrical pattern were eight panels of appropriate flowers and fruits bearing in short phrases of the texts: 'I am the rose of Sharon', 'And the Lily of the Valleys', 'A land of Wheat', 'and barley and vines', 'And fig trees', 'And Pomegranates', 'A land of Oil Olives', 'And Honey'. This very beautiful memorial was dedicated 'To the Glory of God and in memory dear children'. At the base read the names of the Carlisle family and their dates of death. The majority of the original windows were damaged and no longer exist however those remaining in the chancel include the small frame dedicated 'To the Glory of God and in memory dear children' (Figure 15).

To the left of the chancel and above the vestry door was the organ loft, erected in 1918, when the organ was entirely overhauled and the choir installed in the chancel. Organ pipes, some of which are which are still lying in the church originally came from the Liverpool Theatre in 1918 (Figure 16).



Figure 14 (above)
Chancel roof with applied gilt stars



Figure 15 (right)
Original window

Figure 16 (far right)
Organ pipes



The porch has been described by Jameson (1946) as an impressive portion of the building (*Figure 17 and 18*). The floor, octagonal in shape, is of red sandstone with a granite border near the edge. The greater part of the wall consists of clustered columns and mouldings. The ceiling is also of stone with a carved boss in the centre, from which the porch lantern hung. An octagonal stone, in the centre of the floor, though not inscribed, is apparently the foundation stone covering traditional local papers and coins.

Many significant inscriptions can be found in the porch. A memorial window was erected and still remains bearing the dedication to James Carlisle's son, the date of completion and the architect's name.

The window bears the text: *'The lord gave and the lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the lord'*, and lower down: *'In pious remembrance of an only son this church is erected and dedicated to the service and glory of god by James Carlisle of Enfield in the borough of Belfast, J.P. William Henry Lynn, R.H.A. Architect, James Henry Builder 1875'* (*Figure 19*). Under this window were four brass tablets inscribed with the dates of the Carlisle family (*Figure 20*). Over the entrance door, on the inside, is a pointed stone as inscribed as follows: *'The last stone of this church was laid by Anne wife of James Carlisle 11th May 1876 in Gloriam Dei'* (*Figure 21*) (Jameson, 1946).



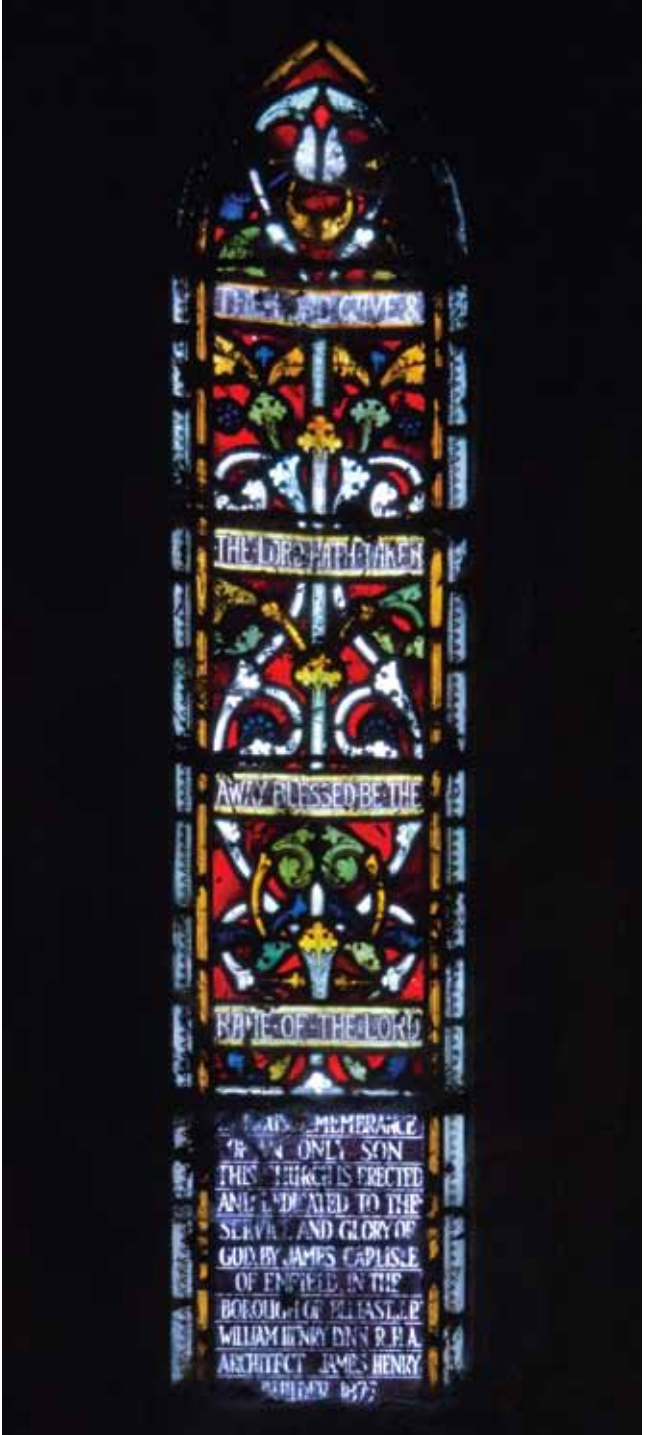
Figure 17 & 18
Porch details



Figure 19 (above)
Porch window

Figure 20 (above right)
Location of Brass Tablets

Figure 21 (right)
Final stone



The original windows of the church have suffered from extensive damage. Perhaps the most beautiful remaining artistic window is the rose window high above the cloister door, which can be best studied from the transept. Each light, or petal, bears the sign of one of the apostles and these spring from the corolla of the rose which bears the letters I.H.C. (Figure 22).



Apostles	Sign
St Peter	a. Crossed keys
St Andrew	b. Cross
St James	c. Pilgrims staff and bottle
St John	d. Chalice with winged serpent flying out of it
St Jude	e. A lance
St James	f. A fullers club
St Philip	g. Long staff surrounded by a cross
St Bartholomew	h. Flaying knife
St Matthew	i. Halbert
St Paul	j. Ship
St Simon	k. A saw
St Thomas	l. A set square

Figure 22
Rose window with supporting
key and table.

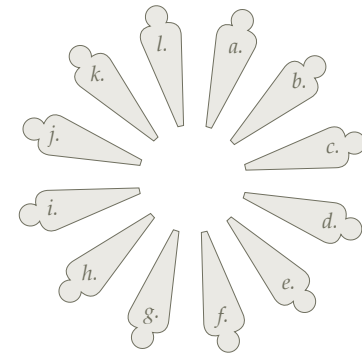


Figure 23 (opposite page)
Fading sandstone dressing



The seating capacity of the church was 1000. The bench ends of the pews, the choir stalls, pulpits and reading desks were all made of pitch pine but unfortunately none remain today. The pew ends differed with no two pews having the same floral pattern arrangement. Pew number 71 was originally occupied by the late Alderman Carlisle and his family and was identified by a small brass plate on the book rack (Jameson, 1946).

The imposing bell tower of the church was claimed to be one of the most beautiful in Belfast. Strangely though, it has always been silent since there were never any bells placed in it. This of course raises the interesting question of why it was built or if indeed, what happened to the bells (BBPT, 2009). Access to the tower is through a tiny, claustrophobic stairway. Old gas lines can still be noticed in this stairway today. Another important feature is the observation room. This room was used by James Carlisle's driver to watch the service and time his departure so he would be waiting at the steps for Mr. Carlisle to exit.

As the cities conflict intensified, the local population began to shift and church attendance unfortunately declined. As a result, the lecture halls and cloister buildings were sold to private companies in 1973. The church building eventually closed its doors in 1982 after serving the local Methodist community for over 100 years. The church building was then bought by the Ulster Provident Housing Association, for a reported £1.

After closing, the building was used as an artist's studio. The closed off areas beside the altar were then converted into flats and rented out for a short period. The middle cloister building is currently the office of a local architect's firm while the other has been the Indian Community Centre since 1981.

As previously mentioned the main church building is currently in a very unstable condition. Significant structural damage is evident throughout the entire building and a recent structural report (2011) has confirmed the main areas of concern to be related to the potential structural failure of the roof, the impact of water ingress over a prolonged of time and the severe weather induced deterioration, decay and failure of the decorative sandstone and mortar.

The juxtaposition of the hard limestone and soft sandstone has led to severe decay of the sandstone for two reasons: firstly, the limestone is much harder, leading to preferential decay of the sandstone. Secondly, limestone and sandstone rain-wash over the limestone becomes enriched in calcium and other minerals that interact with atmospheric pollutants and cause sandstone decay.

BBPT, 2009

The deterioration of the external ornamental sandstone dressings (crosses and floral decorations) was evident as early as 1946 and unfortunately little remains of the crosses and floral decorations today (Figure 23).



Extensive structural decay of the pitched roof over the main body of the church has resulted from severe and prolonged water penetration. This has also resulted in the development of wood rot in the underlying timber structure which carries almost the entire load of the roof (Hall Black Douglas, 2011). The interior of the church has been stripped entirely and parts of the floor have also been removed or seriously damaged. Water penetration has led to the loss of the majority of internal wall finishes (Figure 24). Rainwater has also reacted with marble on the interior columns to form a build up of calcium deposits at varying heights (Figure 25).

Other significant defects identified in the structural report (2011) include:

- Corrosion in wrought and cast iron finial to spire
- Decay of timber louvres in tower and spire
- Slippage of gable verge stones
- Widespread failure of cement-based mortar pointing
- Extensive damage leading to light windows
- Loss of virtually all internal wall finishes
- Loss of all floor structures in nave, aisles and chancel (Hall Black and Douglas, 2011)

On the basis of the recent structural report (2011) recommendations were made and implemented to protect public safety. These included warning signs placed around the building, the removal of all loose stones and cementitious material from the tower and spire, covered walkways for footpaths around the building and structural bracing to gable walls. Currently a proportion of the required restoration funding has been secured and work has commenced to ensure safety and to prevent the further ingress of water.

Figure 24 (opposite page)
Internal damage

Figure 25 (right)
Column deterioration



3.0
Political & Social Context

Belfast’s religious buildings often reflect decades of society-wide sectarian conflict and Carlisle Memorial Church is no exception. On the edge of inner-city Belfast, Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church serves as a sober reminder of Belfast’s architectural legacy and its troubled past (BBPT, 2009). It is important that the historical and social significance of this building is considered for its future redevelopment.

Conflict from the late 1960s to 1998, has marked Northern Ireland as an unusual Christian place in which Protestantism and Catholicism dominate in Belfast, representing 95.8% of the city population. Religion still plays an important role in shaping the social behaviour of many communities, a fact reflected in statistics indicating a significant number of regular adult churchgoers in Northern Ireland (45%) compared to 18% in Scotland; 14% in England and 12% in Wales (Ashworth & Farthing 2007). Unfortunately, little information is available on church attendance rates for young people aged 16 and below. Despite the lack of statistical age related data, religious buildings in Northern Ireland appear to play a unique and vital role in shaping modern society and providing spaces for young people to learn about their faith and culture (McPhillips & Russell, 2011).

The benefits of church buildings to society have also been emphasised by Hobohm, (2008) who determined that the significance church buildings have played in history exceeds their sole function as a place of Christian worship. The church has been an important place for communities, providing not only a place for worship but a central location on which to encourage and nurture community spirit. These buildings are able to therefore offer an architectural and cultural distinctiveness, enabling them to serve as local landmarks, establishing identities for districts (Duckworth, 2010).

The historical significance of church buildings has been expressed by Strong (2007) in the following quote; *‘Seldom are we ever given a glimpse of the [church] building as the historic microcosm over the centuries of a community. Their very fabric tells us of prosperity and depression, of war and peace; extensions in size reflect rise in population; the names of the headstones reveal the families who for generations moulded the life pattern of the land around. We need to develop for a wider public our approach to churches as expressions of past human beings, everyone’s ancestors over the centuries, and shift from the crudity of categorizing a building on its aesthetic merits alone, ignoring all else?’.*

Chidester & Linenthal (1995) argue that a sacred space ‘is not merely discovered, or founded, or constructed; it is claimed, owned and operated by people advancing specific interests’. The most significant aspects of sacred spaces are ‘hierarchical power relations of domination and subordination, inclusion and exclusion, appropriation and dispossession’. It is therefore important that scholars investigate the ‘entrepreneurial, social, political and other profane forces’ that constitute the construction of sacred space [Cited in Collins-Kreiner (2008)]. Foucault (1984) also showed space to be ‘fundamental in any exercise of power’. Conflict and competition are inherent to spatiality, for we are born into a world that is already layered with significance. Space is always significant space so it is the task of geographers to study the ways in which specific meanings and significations are articulated and spatialised, contested and negotiated, by different human communities (Ivakhiv, 2006).

Whilst research suggests that religious buildings are important assets, serving the local community for worship and the wider community for outreach, little research has investigated the implications of disused or redundant churches on local communities and associated identity. The problem of redundant religious buildings is common to many countries including the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The available UK statistics are limited but estimates that the Church of England closes around 20 church buildings each year (Church of England, 2009). Whilst closed and vacant churches have become a presence in the urban landscape and while a desire often exists to save or preserve a former church, the building has proven particularly challenging to convert to other uses (Kiley,2004). There is no doubt that the best use for a historic building is its original use, but with the recent rise in redundant church buildings, questions have been raised over the future use of disused churches. According to Bishop (2009) when a church becomes redundant as a place of worship its options are either retention as a monument, demolition – which often represents that the community has failed or creative re-use – which often indicates that the community has a feeling for the future – or continued religious use by another denomination. Bishop (2009) argues that in order to achieve a successful re-use of church buildings, it is first necessary to carry out an evaluation of a buildings significance in local, regional and national terms and then to establish its potential significance as an urban resource within the community as a whole.

Despite the lack of statistics providing details on the number of redundant churches in Northern Ireland, it is clear that local churches occupy a key position in the architectural heritage of Northern Ireland. Disused churches in Northern Ireland have unfortunately been targets of vandalism and environmental decay, especially those set in opposing communities or interface areas. The impact of the demolition or continued decay of these building in Northern Ireland is unknown however; previous research by Latham (2000) suggests that demolition or decay of such buildings may have a negative impact on communities emotional well-being as the value of the building is placed in jeopardy.

Re-use refers to the renewed use of the building in its original function or to the recycling of its material (Asselbergs, 1996). Adaptive or creative (Latham, 2000) re-use more specifically refers to the process of giving a building a new existence (Asselbergs, 1996) and function when it is no longer used or suitable for use in its original function (Bogie, Nelissen, smots and Voorzee, 1999); (Debets, 1985), (Cited in Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). The creative re-use of any building requires a solution to be local and specific to the situation. Bishop (2009) states that an important factor of any re-use proposal is the inclusion of local communities within the process. The solutions often lie within the needs and aspirations of the local neighbourhoods. It is essential to remember that each church has, in the past, been an integral part of its neighbourhood and its return to this position is often a partnership either between the local population and local and national government, or private individuals and companies and local and national government. A church building has been constructed to serve the needs of a community and despite the fact that these needs have often changed, it is important that the church building is modified in such ways that can still serve the population. An understanding of the requirements of the community and the needs for conservation of the historic environment is therefore essential for success (Bishop, 2009).

A recent UK wide survey by the National Churches Trust highlighted the invaluable contribution that church buildings make to society, to the heritage of the nation and to the vibrancy of community life.

A recent UK wide survey by the National Churches Trust highlighted the invaluable contribution that church buildings make to society, to the heritage of the nation and to the vibrancy of community life. These results show that without church buildings the UK would be a poorer place, socially, culturally and architecturally (National Churches Trust, 2011).

In Belfast, religious spaces are generally ‘church spaces’, which are often historically used to interpret local identity and to forge politically useful connections to the past (Vale, 1999). In Northern Ireland, religious buildings have become a symbolic connection between territory and identity which result in the surrounding space becoming highly signified. Unlike other typologies, the visual impacts of church architecture as well as their locales have strongly influenced the shaping of the built environment in Northern Ireland, and hence the sense of belonging (Mitchell, 2006).

Re-use rather than demolition of churches means that at least their physical survival is ensured and, at its best, re-use may even revitalize a community physically, economically and psychologically (Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). Many examples exist of successful re-use schemes but little has been researched in a tensioned society such as Northern Ireland.

Prominent local conservation architects, Dawson Stelfox and Bronagh Lynch from Consarc Design offered their thoughts on the challenges facing the conservation and adaptation of church buildings. From their experience, the key to success lies in finding the most appropriate re-use option that meets the needs of the local community and offers a clear collective benefit for the population. In the context of a divided society such as Northern Ireland, the space around the building must be considered and in some cases multiple entrances to the restored building may provide a solution to increasing user engagement from potentially opposing communities. Consarc have re-designed and restored a number of Northern Ireland churches including St Patrick’s Church, Holy Cross Church, St Malachy’s Church and St Thomas’ Parish Church. St Thomas’ church provides an excellent example which demonstrates how a church building can adapt to a declining congregation. The conservation of this building demonstrates a creative way of using a church building to enable worship and also to be a facility for the local community.

Community attachment to sacred places has also been largely ignored, minimized or marginalised. If we consider church spaces as significant to the physiological well-being of community as these places contribute fundamentally to a sense of place and belonging, then it follows that we have to ensure that the community’s views are actively sought in the identification of heritage assets. Lederach (1997) emphasises the important role of community involvement and states that people in conflict or tensioned settings should be seen as resources rather than recipients. Consultation must be taken across all age ranges of the community and not solely focused on people with considerable knowledge in the history of the area and vocal stakeholders groups such as historical societies (Spennemann, 2006).

The current state of Carlisle Memorial church does little to contribute positively to the local community. It acts as a visual barrier to investors and sits in essentially a ‘no-mans land’ (BBPT, 2009). According to the Belfast Building Preservation Trust (2009) its dereliction is a cipher for the state of the community. The Carlisle Circus area, along with the Crumlin and Antrim Roads in particular, but North Belfast in general has suffered heavily from economic and social decline over the past 35 years. The population of the area has declined significantly and the political situation has had a detrimental effect on the economic and social development of the area (BBPT, 2009). According to the Dunlop Report (2002) the area faces major socioeconomic problems including; high levels of deprivation, high levels of out-migration, high levels of unemployment, low educational attainment levels, significant youth issues, including low levels of aspiration and related crime/community safety issues, many serious health problems and a lack of clear single identity but rather a series of small, often isolated communities that are highly segregated. The report also adds that ‘the areas poor social and economic conditions are reflected in and exacerbated by the physical condition of North Belfast including high rates of dereliction and redundant industrial land’.

According to the BBPT (2009) the regeneration of Carlisle Memorial Church has the potential to harness more power than simply being a restored historic building. It is recognised that due to the highly fractured nature of the area finding community support for any proposed project will be difficult and finding unanimous support is very unlikely. Research by the BBPT (2009) has identified several re-use options through detailed discussion with the local community. The most feasible options include residential apartments, offices, gallery, conference, exhibition, entertainment, and leisure or performance space. The BBPT intention is to focus long-term reuse around enterprise, entrepreneurship, skills development and social innovation, to take the social and economic context of the building into account and to reinforce the Trust’s ethos of working to deliver physical and social regeneration.

As research is currently on-going in relation to understanding community attachment to the church building mainly from an adult perspective, this RIBA funded project aimed to focus on youth perceptions (age 11-14) of Carlisle Memorial Church.

The connection young people have to religious spaces in Northern Ireland has not been researched extensively, however, a recent study by McPhillips and Russell (2011) investigated how young people from different religious backgrounds perceived certain elements of place, religion and identity, in particular, how they interpreted and negotiated the spatial layout of religious buildings and perceived the relationship between the space and the religion itself. The study concluded that the teenagers had the clear ability to negotiate and interpret religious space through reflective drawing.

The study suggests that teenage youth can provide an outline of experienced worship space and identify the areas and objects of importance both from observation and from memory.

By exploring this concept further and allowing young people to experience and comprehend alternative spaces, symbols and spatial patterns, they could become more visually connected and appreciative of their environment and local architecture.

Other research focusing on youth identity in Northern Ireland suggests that children from as young as three years of age living in interface areas possess the ability to identify key cultural symbols as distinguishing facets of the Catholic or Protestant communities (Connelly, 1999 cited in Leonard, 2008). These symbols enhance feelings of belonging to one community or the other and often refer to highly controversial and politicised religious spaces (Leonard, 2008); (Marranci, 2004).

Spatial experience of architecture can be used as a tool to help explore and remove the anxieties that surround religious identities.

Interestingly, the study showed that the youths tended to be overwhelmed by the objects in the space and as a result disregarded the form of architecture and the buildings original purpose and denomination. The composition or form of the space did not appear to be relevant in any of drawings; however, the majority of young people developed and defined each space through a systematic reflection on objects, text and symbology. In essence, findings suggested that spatial experience of architecture can be used as a tool to help explore and remove the anxieties that surround religious identities especially in contested spaces such as Northern Ireland. Religious spaces are clearly important to young people in Northern Ireland and ultimately become an extension of their identity, but their relationships appears to lie with objects and symbols as opposed to architectural elements.

By age ten children have a strong sense of boundaries and express fears of venturing beyond their local area (Connolly and Healy, 2003). It is these fears which need to be challenged in order to develop understanding and tolerance of other religious groups, therefore helping to build a more culturally diverse environment. Questions however remain in relation to how youths perceive or interact with a religious building that is no longer in use but still located in a tensioned area. The following methodology explains the approach taken to establish answers to the above research questions.

4.0 Methodology

The methodological approach for this project was twofold; firstly, the development of a detailed account of Carlisle Memorial Church in terms of its contextual and historical significance, documenting its subsequent demise and secondly, the development of youth focused workshops to enable drawings and oral accounts to be documented in relation to Carlisle Memorial Church.

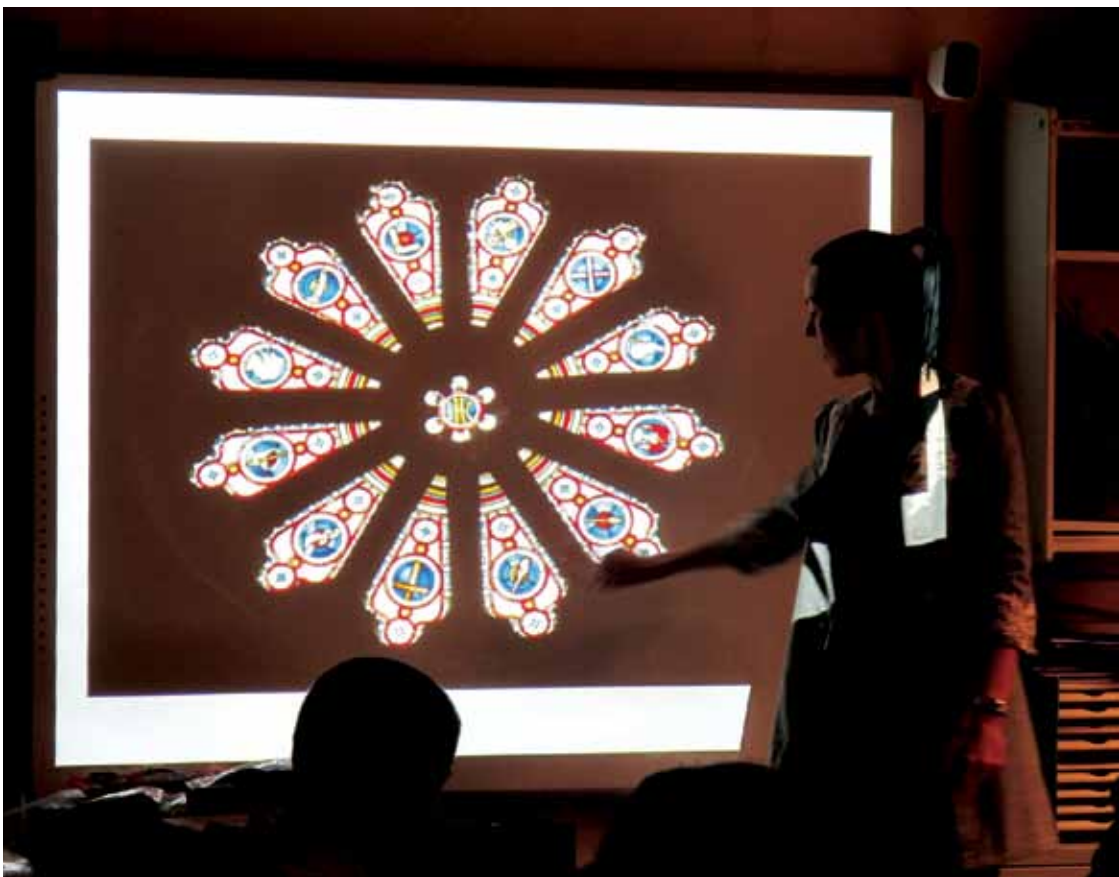


Figure 26 (above)
Workshop #1

Figure 27 (right)
Workshop #2



4.1 Workshops

Originally it was hoped that interviews with participants could take place during walk about tours of the building. Unfortunately due to the poor condition of the building, and in the interests of safety, visits were no longer possible so an alternative methodological approach had to be designed. The revised workshops were therefore held at the participating school; the Belfast Royal Academy, and consisted of a photographic presentation of Carlisle Memorial Church.

The workshop presentation encompassed visual, textural, oral and audio processes: The young people were initially asked to draw their expectations of a typical church building as they remembered or imagined it to look like. The youth's were then asked a series of questions regarding their opinions and knowledge of Carlisle Memorial Church. At the completion of the presentation, which concerned the historical development of the building, a responsive session was conducted. During the responsive session the participants were asked to reflect on the church building and the information they had just viewed. They were then asked to reflect on the future use of the building through drawing (Figure 26, 27 & 28).

Drawing was used in this research to elicit information particularly in relation to the environment. It has been found that children and young people will often draw that which is important to them and leave out that which is not (Butterworth, 1977).

To draw is one of the means by which young people express their inner-self and can be interpreted as a method of communication, which is often the case in sociological and psychological research. They draw what they know in their own style and thus their perceptions, emotions, sensibilities, and motor functions, together with the factor of social experience are all added to the picture that is drawn on the paper (Kitahara and Matsuishi, 2006). By combining the described drawings of the young people and with observations of behaviour and informal interviews conducted throughout the workshop presentation, it was hoped that the techniques would be as youth-friendly as possible, to enable an analysis of the data to be implemented to the highest standard.

The main ethical implications of this research included the consideration of the young people as a vulnerable group and the fact that the project dealt with the difficult issue of religion in Northern Ireland. Methodologies were consulted which deal with children and sensitive issues such as religion in Northern Ireland. A variety of participatory tools and techniques were adopted during the workshops with the youth. These tools are described in the 'tools for adolescent and youth participation' document developed by the commonwealth youth programme and have been selected for their ability to generate discussion and to understand particular organisations and identities (Commonwealth Youth Programme, 2005).



Figure 28
Workshop #3

4.2 Developing Questionnaires

Aspects of a questionnaire devised by Bradley (2010) from the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies at Newcastle University were adopted to establish opinions of historic buildings especially in terms of sense of place indicators. Additional questions included religious experiences and background information such as gender and area of residence.

4.3 Photographic Sessions

A professional photographer was appointed to record and document the building in its existing state (August 2011). This was prior to any structural work being carried out that would make the building watertight. These photographs were used for the workshop presentations and the final exhibition. The final exhibition is scheduled for June – August 2012 and will be held in PLACE, The Architectural and Built Environment Centre for Northern Ireland.

4.4 School Selection

Several local schools were asked to participate in the research. Unfortunately response rates were low however one local school, The Belfast Royal Academy, agreed to participate with the research and hosted a series of workshops. The Belfast Royal Academy had been selected due to their proximity to Carlisle Memorial Church. They also were able to provide a range of students from differing genders and religious backgrounds.

The researcher liaised directly with the school to identify the most suitable classes in the correct age range of 11-14. It was decided that scheduled art classes would best be used for the workshop in order to encourage active participation in drawing. These classes contained students from a variety of religious backgrounds and drawing abilities.

4.5 Data Analysis

The data was analysed through the development of a series of comparative indicators, tabling the experience of each participant, before and after the presentation. Regarding their drawings, a section of analysis was dedicated to addressing this evidence purely and objectively as representations of space, through the consideration of the drawings by means of overall pattern; drawing method; scale; orientation and certain key points highlighted, in order to contextualize the case study analysis on the basis of representation. Qualitative discussions were also undertaken regarding the drawings by the participant. The data was analysed in two sections; expectations and responsive actions which were based on a series of questions that the respondent were asked after the presentation relating to the influence of architecture on local identity and the redevelopment potential of this building.

4.6 Confidentiality Issues

Within most research projects, it is fundamental to maintain the anonymity of the participants and to offer confidentiality to all those involved. This is of paramount importance when working with children. In all cases, confidentiality will be preserved to maintain the greatest anonymity possible for the participants. The University of Ulster has a policy statement regarding good practice in research. This can be accessed at www.ulster.ac.uk/research.

A risk assessment has shown potential risks to include ensuring confidentiality. The researcher utilized forms of participatory leaning and action (PLA) techniques to ensure the young people felt involved and confident in the research process. At the end of each workshop the group openly discussed what they felt/thought about the building. The researcher facilitated this discussion to ensure comments, especially those of a negative nature, were explored by the group and turned into a positive message.

4.7 Consent and Child Protection

The issue of consent is of vital importance in carrying out research with children. Not only should the consent of both the children participating and their guardians be essential, but their consent should only be obtained when the research proposal and its aims and objectives are not only explained, but also understood. All participants under 18 years of age require the consent of a parent or guardian in order to take part in the study. The explanations need to be at a level of appropriateness with regard to the ages of the children participating and also should allow the child to understand the purpose of the research project and the way in which their involvement will contribute to the research as a whole.

As this research project involves the participation of children, there are very particular ethical considerations including the safeguard of children. The Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI), the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People (NICCY) guidelines for working with children and the University of Ulster child Protection Policy have been consulted and addressed. Both the guidelines of the British Psychological Society (BPS), in which their Code of Conduct, Ethical Considerations and Guidelines, outline the minimum standards required of the profession, and the Centre for the Child and Society at the University of Glasgow, whose guidelines set out the standards of good practice, were drawn upon within the context of this proposal and informed the methodological approach taken. The researcher involved in this project had undertaken the process of having disclosures carried out by DENI.

5.0 Analysis & Discussions

The following section presents an analysis of the workshops investigating youth perceptions of disused religious space, in particular Carlisle Memorial Church. The analysis is divided into questionnaire responses, reflections on Carlisle Memorial Church, analysis of workshops drawings and finally workshop discussions.

5.1 Questionnaire

106 children aged between 11-14 took part in 5 workshops held during November and December 2011. The questionnaire contained several categories relating to gender, religion and postcode area of residence. From these questions it was determined that 48% of the participants were female and 52% were male. In terms of religious affiliation it was found that 48% of the participants classified themselves as Protestant, 13% Christian, 16% Catholic, 8% Atheist and the remaining as Jewish, Buddhism, Celtic Paganism and as Christian mixed religions. The respondents lived in a variety of areas with 40% living within the city boundaries of Belfast. Only 6.5% lived in the same postal area as the church hence a strong familiarity with the building by name was not evident during the workshops. Despite this, once a photograph of the building was shown 95% of the respondents were able to identify its location in relation to their School.

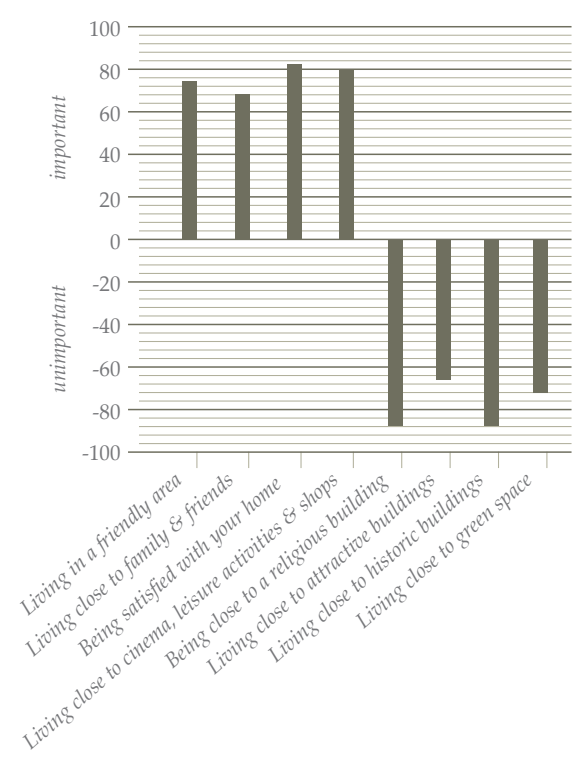
The participants were asked about how often they attended a religious building in order to ascertain their relationship with this type of building. In terms of attendance to religious building, 36% of respondents stated they visited a religious building at least once or twice per week. 34% stated they never attended a religious building, 11% attended at least once a month, 9% once or twice a year on special occasions and 10% stated they did not attend as often as they would like too.

Part of the questionnaire aimed to identify what factors youth consider to be important when considering what makes an area a good place to live. In terms of considering the factors as listed by Bradley et al (2011) the majority of participants (68%) felt that living close to family and friends was very important. Living in a friendly area was classified as important (75%) along with being satisfied with their own home (83%) and living close to cinema, leisure activities and shops (80%). However in terms of associations with religious buildings, being close to a religious building was classified by the participants as slightly unimportant (37%) or unimportant (51%) with a minority of 12% considering close proximity to a religious building to be an important or very important factor in making somewhere a good place to live. A positive link was identified between youth who frequently attended a religious building and those who felt it was important or very important to live close to a religious building.

The youths also classified living near to attractive buildings (66%), historic buildings (89%) and surprisingly green space (72%) as slightly unimportant or unimportant (figure 29). The questionnaire also identified that the majority of respondents (82%) stated that had not visited an historic building in the past year either in or out of School.

Further questions were asked to determine youth satisfaction with the area in which they lived. In terms of this, the majority of respondents appeared to be happy with their area with most adding they would be unsure about living elsewhere (92%). Most youth involved in the workshops were proud of where they lived and cared about what it looked like (89%) but did not appear to have an interest in its local history (78%).

Figure 29
Importance rating of factors contributing to making somewhere a good place to live



The questionnaire also aimed to establish buildings that the youth liked and disliked. In terms of establishing building liked by the participants, a wide variety of buildings were identified including Tesco's, Local shops, Cinemas, Belfast Castle, Carrickfergus Castle, Queens University, Victoria Square Shopping Centre, KFC and Subway. When questioned about buildings they disliked, answers were limited. Only 12% of respondents answered this question and answers included public toilets, next door neighbours and 'rundown' buildings.

5.2 Carlisle Memorial Church

A section of the workshop was dedicated to examining the participants knowledge of Carlisle Memorial Church and their reflections on its historical development and redevelopment potential. In relation to the church the majority of participants were not familiar with the building by name. Although, as previously mentioned, once a photograph of the building was shown 95% of the respondents were able to identify its location in relation to the School. Those living in closer proximity to the church did not appear to a greater sense of ownership or concern over its future redevelopment.

92% of the respondents commented that the presentation reflecting on the historical development of the church was interesting and felt that knowing about the buildings history helped create a greater interest and more positive view of the church. 98% of the youth agreed the church should be preserved and the story of its development should be made more widely available. After the presentation, the participants were asked to consider the future use of the building. The responses were varied and a selection can be viewed in figure 30. The most cited option for future use was for a youth centre and museum that would document the history of the building and the Carlisle Family.

5.3 Drawing Analysis

The drawings produced during the workshops were of an excellent quality and contained a mixture of elevation and floor plan representations. Overall, the youth participants appeared to adopt natural drawing techniques relatively typical of their age range; using single lines and simplistic plan views. They utilised the basic elements (walls, windows, doors and roofs – ie. arche-types) to demonstrate their expectations. Basic geometrical primitives for example squares and circles were also used. The external space or facade of the building or indeed its location did not seem to be of any significance to the young people, with the exception of using it as a natural way of describing the building.

The drawings produced during the workshops were of an excellent quality and contained a mixture of elevation and floor plan representations.



Figure 30
Youth Re-Use Options for Carlisle Memorial Church

- Keep it as a church
- Wedding & parties
- History & Culture museum
- Monument
- Choir & Music Hall
- A church with a nightclub on top
- Tourist attraction
- After school club
- Ice rink
- Paint ball
- Youth club with pool & hockey tables
- Dance school
- Aviary
- Library
- Hospital
- Homeless Centre
- Aquarium
- Cinema
- Lazerquest
- Super Bowling Alley
- Council buildings
- Hostel
- Bomb bunker
- Fast food shop
- Leisure centre
- Knock it down/build something new

Figure 31
Expectation drawing of a church

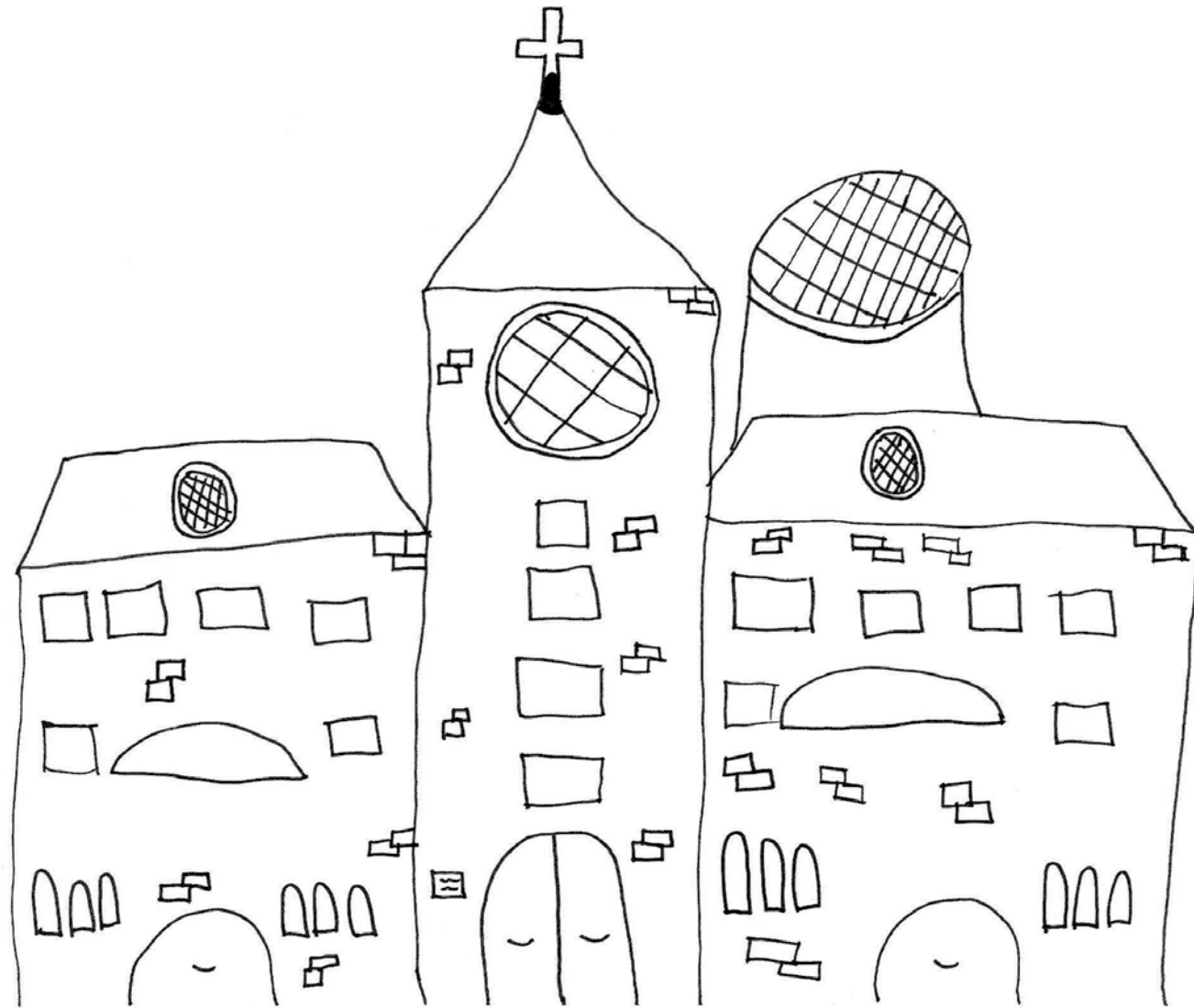


Figure 32
Expectation drawing showing stone work

The youth participants demonstrated confidence when drawing a typical church building, with very few asking for help with this task. Expectation drawings of a typical church building were generally well composed elevation drawings and strong in terms of religious symbology including crosses, stained glass windows, bells and spires (Figure 31). Facades were decorated with stonework with proportionality and balance apparent in the majority of drawings (Figure 32).

Main entrances to the church buildings were also clearly evident with pathways and steps drawn to signify importance (Figure 33). Some drawings considered the typical location and landscaping of a church building with the inclusion of graveyards, trees, grass, access roads, and car parking spaces (Figure 34). Text was also evident in some drawings, mainly of a biblical content including 'Let your sins go' and 'Jesus died for you' (Figure 35).

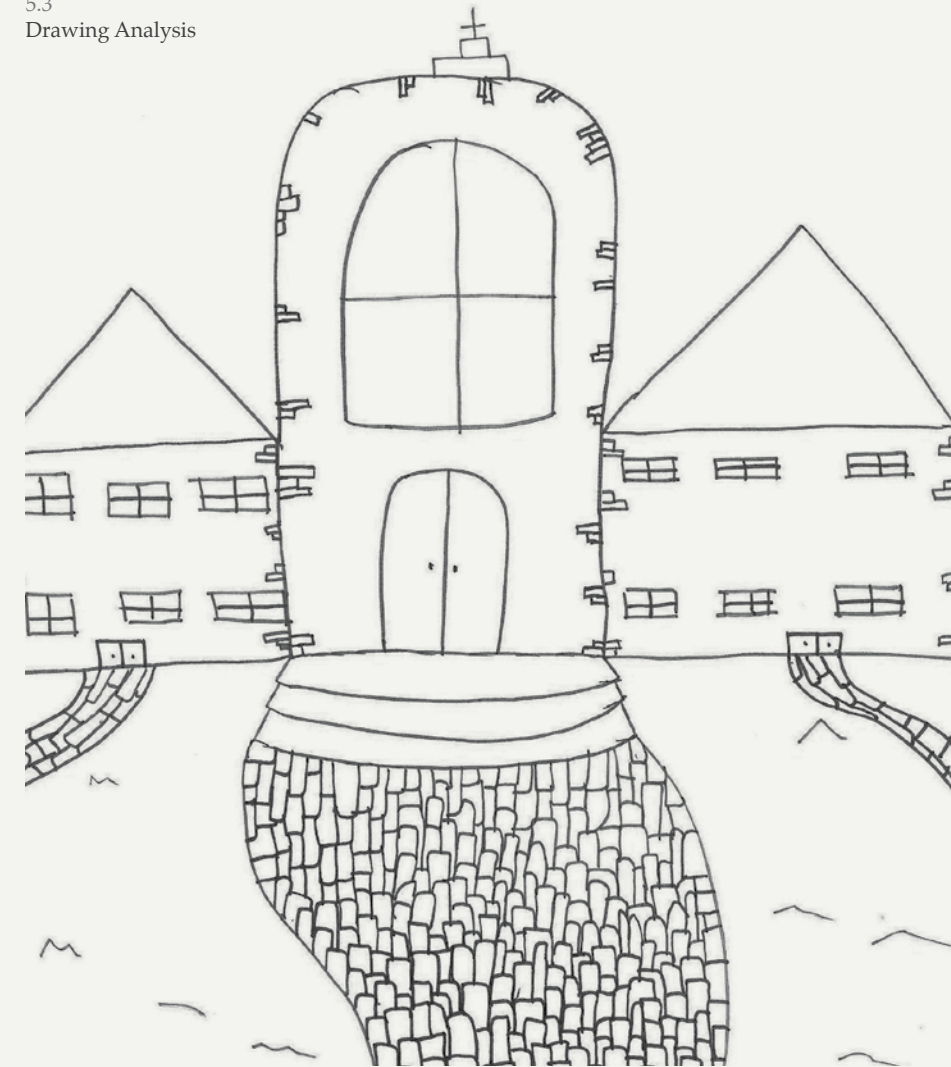
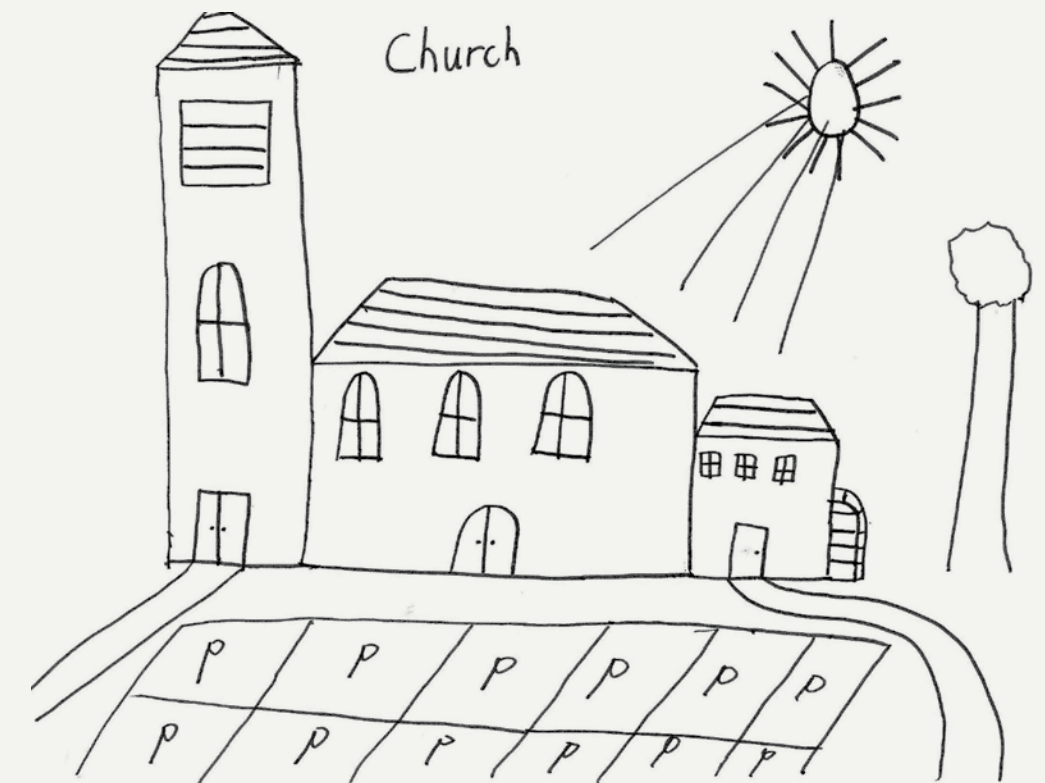


Figure 33 (above)
Expectation drawing showing entrance

Figure 34 (right)
Expectation drawing showing carpark



The responsive drawings provided a mixture of external facade and floor plan interpretations. Regardless of proposed use, the facade of the building remained intact, perhaps demonstrating a respect for the current buildings architectural form (Figure 36, 37 and 38). Aspects of religious integration was also evident in drawings possibly indicating that the buildings previous religious association was no longer relevant and that shared community relations is viewed as important by this age group (Figure 39).

Another interesting aspect of the responsive drawing task was that a clear respect for the buildings past was evident. Despite the many reuse options provided during the workshops, the majority of participants felt it important to indicate a distinct space in their drawings in which to commemorate the Carlisle Family (Figure 40).

This suggests the workshops were useful in enabling the local youth to develop a connection to the building through its story of development. Other interesting re-use options provided by the youths include a gymnasium, dinosaur museum, art centre and restoring the building back to a church (Figures 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45).

Figure 35
Expectation drawing
showing Biblical references

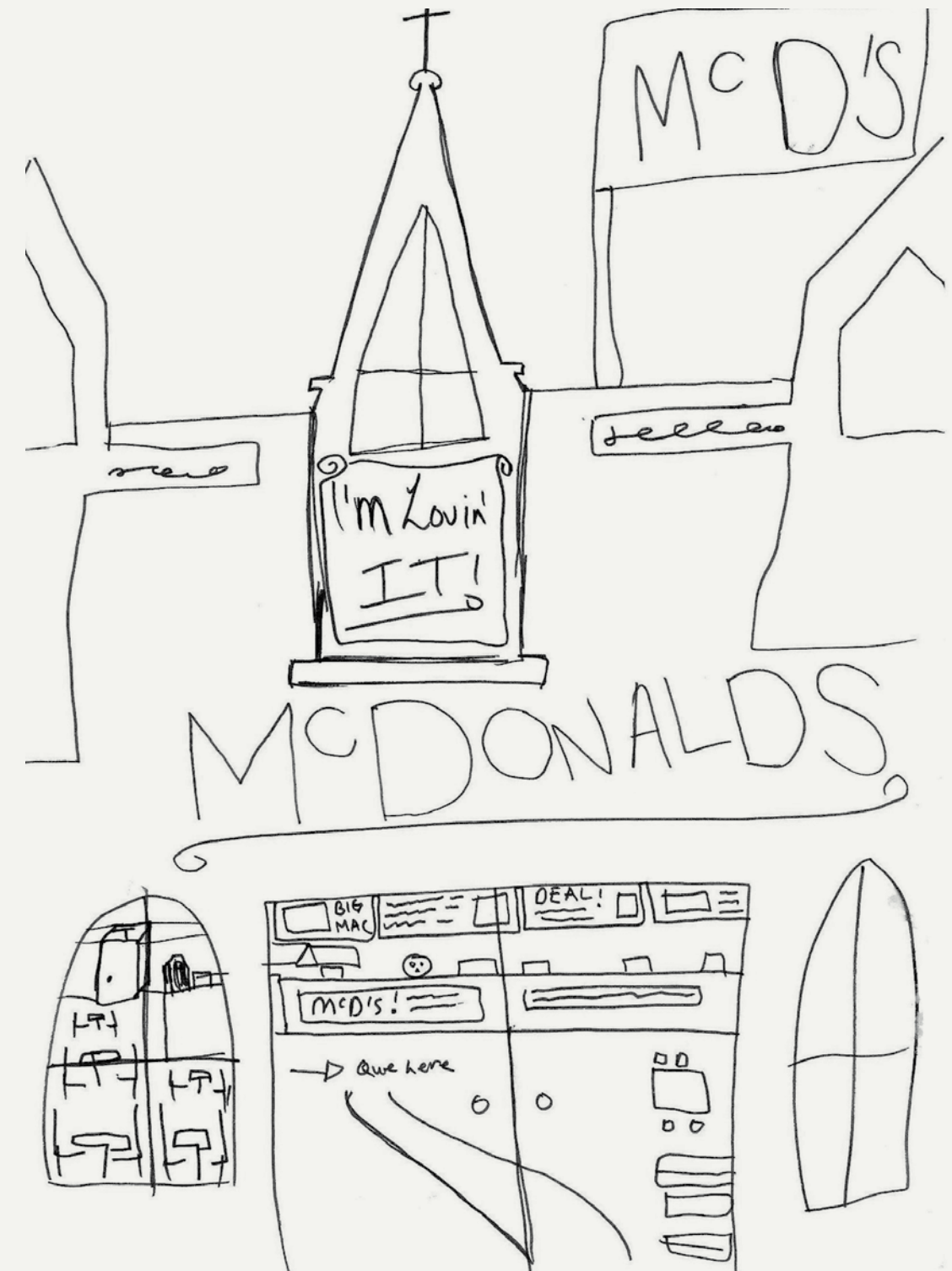
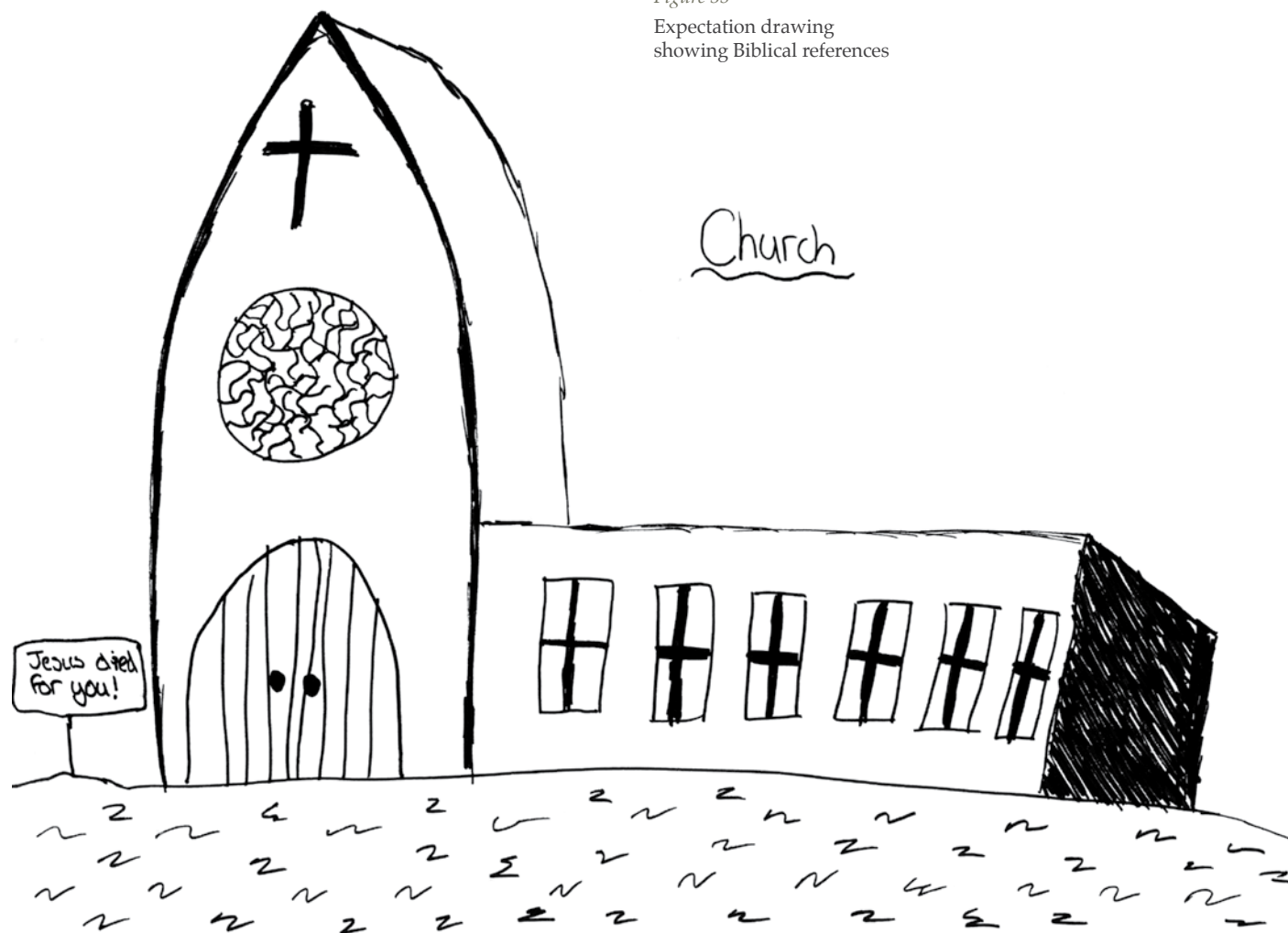
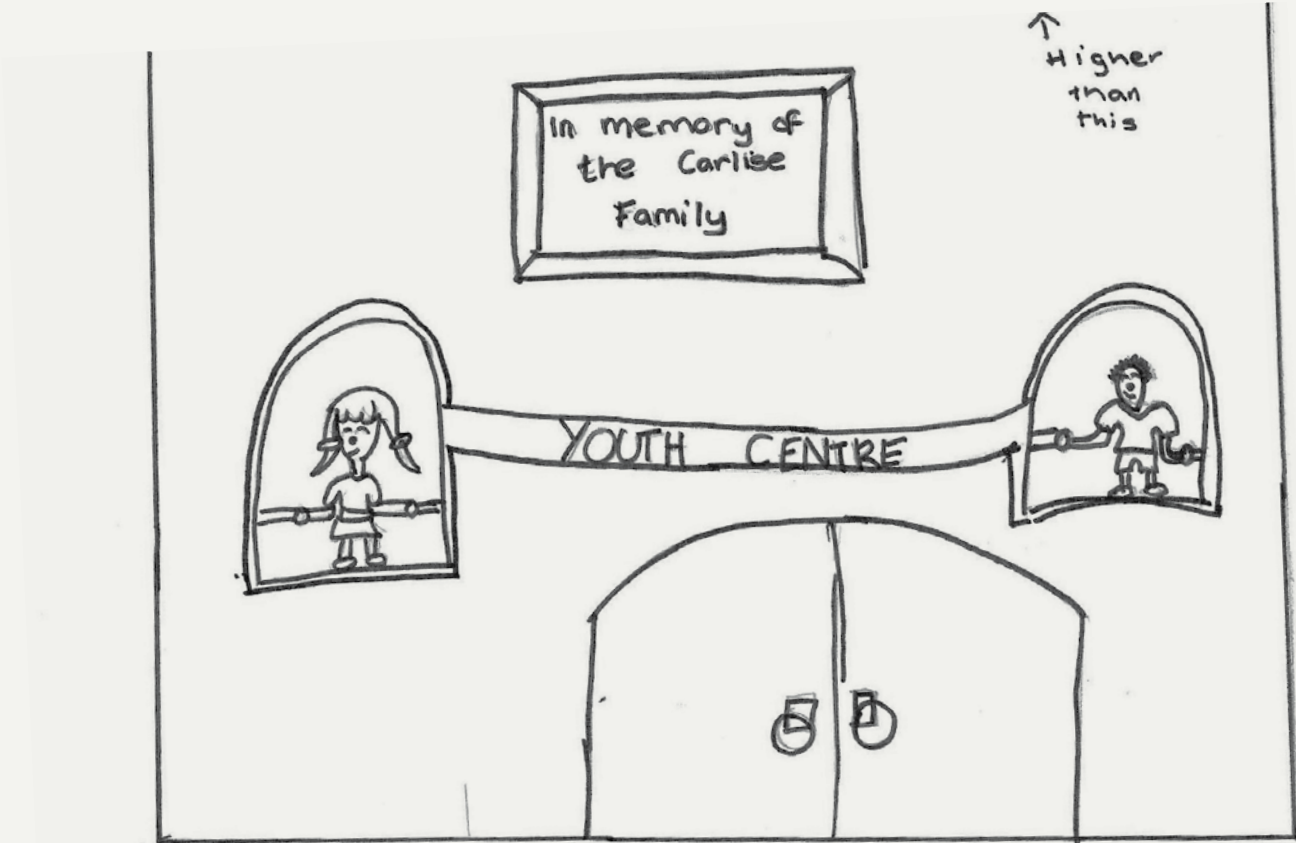


Figure 36
Reuse option 'McDonald's'



Figure 37 (left)
Reuse option 'Cinema'

Figure 38 (below)
Reuse option 'Dance Hall'

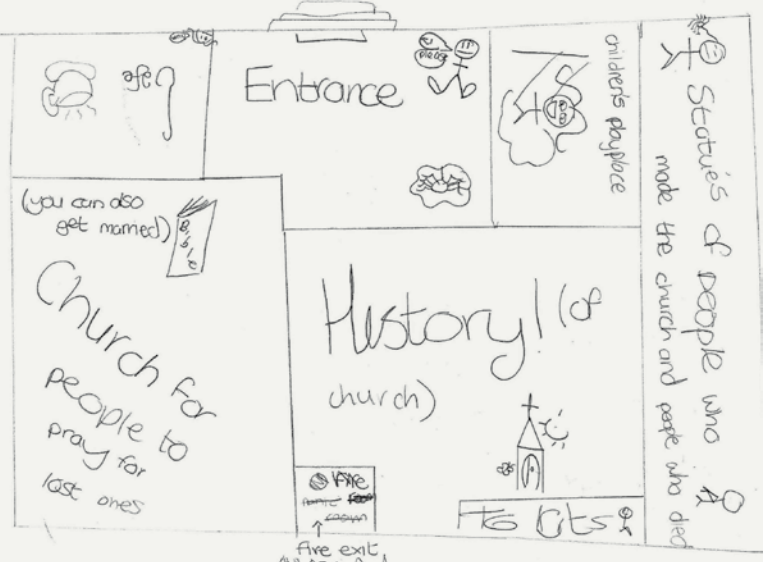


"The windows could be restrained to show a boy and girl holding hands like a community should. Although keep the structure of the Church the same and keep some of the monument on it."

Quotation by a student from The Belfast Royal Academy
Figure 39

Figure 39 (above)
Reuse option
'Community Youth Centre'

Figure 40 (right)
Reuse option 'Mixed use
with commemoration area'

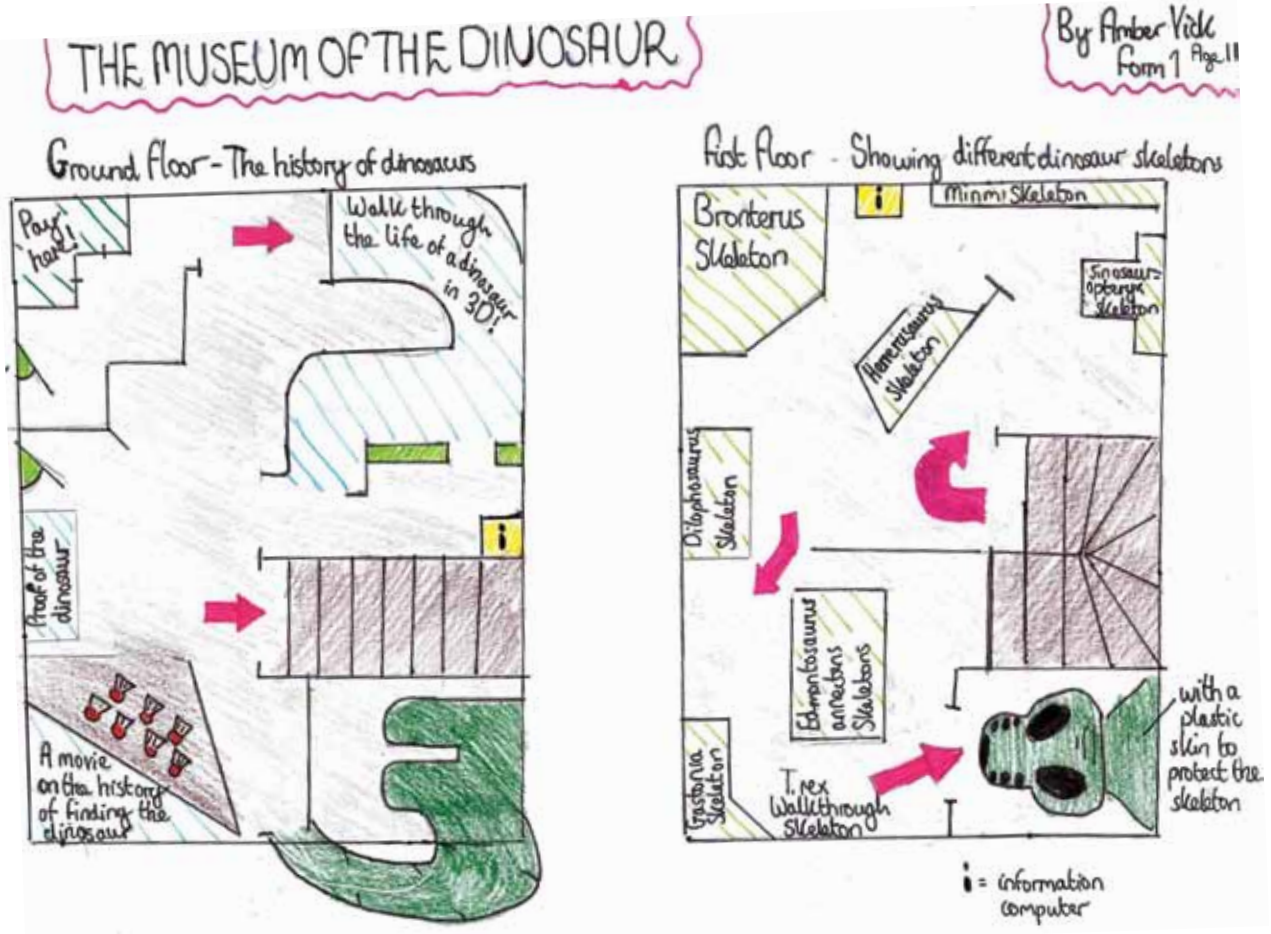




My re-design of Carlisle Church

my re-design is a gymnastics centre, gymnastics is my favorite sport and Carlisle is only 5mins away from me so it would be handy to have a brand-new gymnastics centre there! In the gymnastics centre there is a professional training room with all new first-class equipment, there is also a room to buy new costumes for competitions and a cafeteria for the gymnasts to relax when they're not working hard!

Figure 41
Reuse option
'Gymnasium'

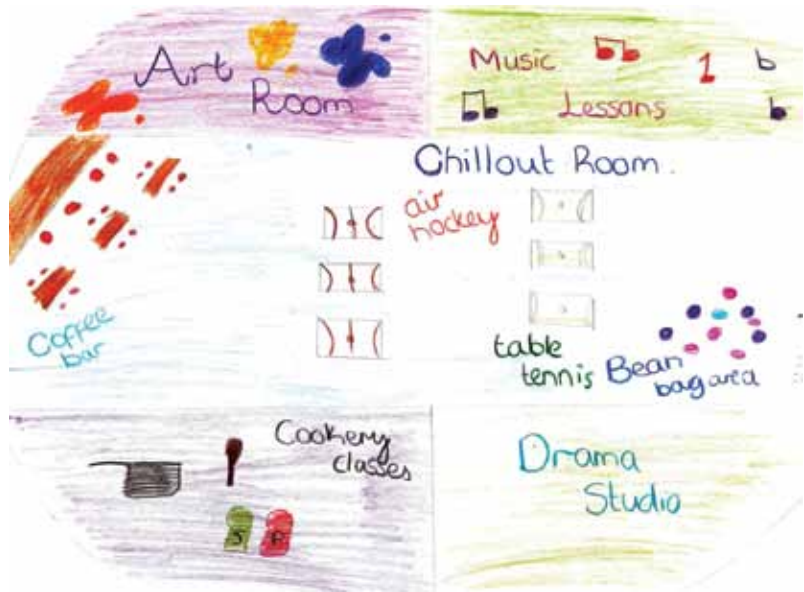


My Carlisle Church has been changed into a museum that shows the history of the dinosaur, with a 3D walkthrough tunnel of dinosaurs, a play that is shown about how the dinosaurs died and how they were discovered, a real walkthrough skeleton of a T-Rex and it also shows many skeletons and proof of their living.

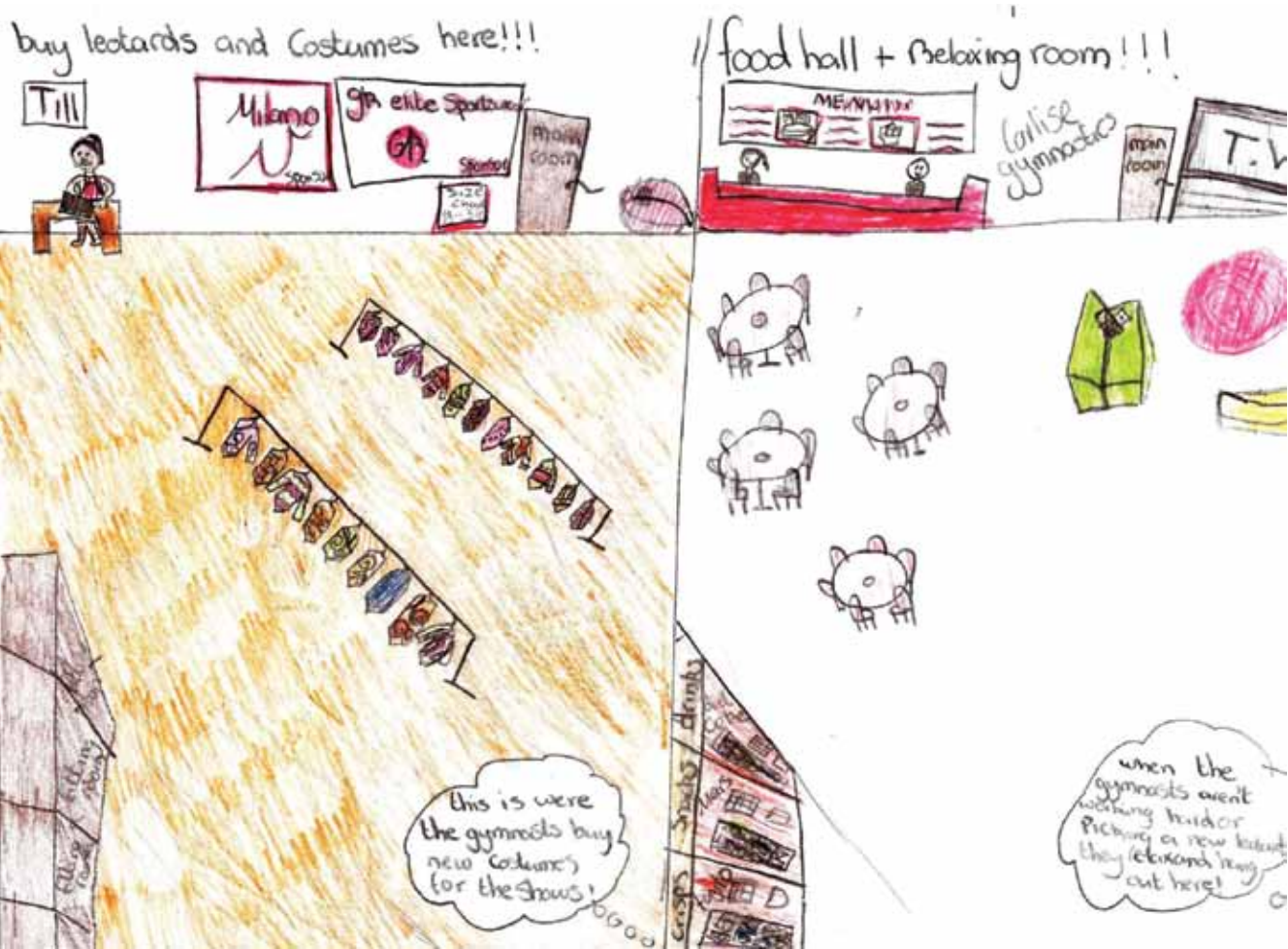
I thought this would be a good idea for the church as I think in Belfast people need to take time to think about the history of where they may be standing and need more of an understanding.

I hope you like my idea!

Figure 42
Reuse option
'Dinosaur Museum'



An architect came to our school and luckily I got the chance to listen to her speak about an old church called Carlisle Memorial Methodist church. We heard all about the church and how it was being funded by the World Monuments fund. Then we got the chance to go home and think of our very own way of changing the church into what we like. I decided that I wanted to do something that would be fun for my age. So I decided to draw up somewhere you could go and be yourself. I included in my drawing an art room where lessons could take place. A music room where lessons could take place as well as band rehearsals or things like that. I also included a big kitchen for cookery classes and a drama studio. The biggest place is the chill out room where you can have a coffee or watch tv or just chill out!! There could be youth clubs held there or just for a rainy day!!



5.4 Workshop Discussion Analysis

The youth were encouraged to ask questions throughout the workshop sessions. Typical questions queried the historical context and in particular the cause of death for the Carlisle children. Youth participants also wanted to share their knowledge or experience of the building. Many knew that the Indian community centre was located in the building and it was located next door to an Orange Lodge building. Discussion also took place between the researcher and the youth during the drawing tasks. The researcher encouraged drawing and took time to ask participants about aspects of their drawing therefore gaining further understanding for analysis purposes. Issues surrounding religion were not raised at any point during any of the workshops, perhaps indicative of the benefits of a mixed religion school. The youth were also encouraged to share their ideas through text and this also evidenced their desire for the building to be restored (figure 46).

Figure 43 (opposite page, top)
Reuse option 'Art, music and chill out youth centre'

Figure 44 (opposite page, bottom)
Reuse option 'Gymnasium with shop'

Figure 45 (below)
Reuse option 'Restore as a church'



I think Carlisle Memorial Church should remain a church because it has a lot of history and it would bring more people to the area.

I also think that some of the old bricks should be used in the new building because it would have some of the original history still there. If you changed the church into something else all of the history would be lost.

A place where children who are having a hard time at school, home or in their social life can go to relax, chill and have fun while getting good advice from teachers. The church was dedicated to the children that had passed away, so why not turn it into a place for kids!?

It should have areas where you can sit down and relax, play games & talk to other kids who are having a hard time like you. Bigger areas for playing and having fun. All children who go to the new building should feel welcomed and comfortable.

I think that this church should remain a church, because if it was refurbished, it would be an extraordinary church.

It could have stained glass windows, but the original ones. It would also have the original altar, but if the ground & roof & ceiling were done up, it would be an amazing church.

Also if the outside of the church has been cleaned, and the same with the doors, it would look lovely & people would want to visit it. If the holes in the roof were fixed also it would be perfect.

If nobody wants a church, it could become a museum.

Figure 46
Reuse options

6.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The key questions considered for this research project related to establishing the role and influence of a disused religious building on local identity, principally youth identity, in a contested space. Previous and ongoing research by the BBPT (2009) established that the highly fractured nature of the area in which Carlisle Memorial Church is located creates a difficult environment in which to find unanimous community support for any proposed redevelopment project. This existing tension suggests that local identity is still strongly connected to the building. The identity of the building as a Methodist church may have diminished as the building has continued to decay, however space is still clearly perceived in this area as fundamental to the exercise of power. In light of this, local communities need to maintain their sense of belonging to the area and the buildings within it. A debate clearly still continues over ownership of this building and the space that it occupies. There is no doubt that the proposed re-use of the building must be a neutral solution which can bring equal benefits to all local communities and age groups.

The identity of the building as a Methodist church may have diminished as the building has continued to decay, however space is still clearly perceived in this area as fundamental to the exercise of power.

As research is still progressing with regard to the redevelopment of Carlisle Memorial Church it was felt that investigating youth perception would aid the overall reuse potential of this building and assist in policy development for the reinvention of other historic buildings in Belfast for wider community use.

In terms of youth identity and place attachment, this research, although a relatively small study, established that proximity to a building does not necessarily create a stronger connection or association with it from a youth perspective. Youth living close to Carlisle Memorial church, regardless of religious background, did not consider its previous use relevant when thinking about its redevelopment potential. This is perhaps related to the fact that the participants have only known this building to be 'disused' and therefore have limited attachment due to a lack of personal experience of Carlisle Memorial Church as a functional building.

The fact that the church building also houses a minority religion (Indian Community Centre) and is located next to an Orange lodge office (a symbol closely associated with Unionism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland) did not appear to influence youth considerations of the re-use options for this building. Despite previous studies by McPhillips & Russell (2010) highlighting that local youths in Belfast have a limited knowledge of minority religions, the location of the Indian community centre and Orange lodge was welcomed and from a youth perspective posed no threat or raised any issue regarding re-use.

The study also demonstrated that the youth felt that it was more important to live somewhere attractive rather than historic.

With reference to young people’s associations with the built environment in a more general context, findings suggested that unless youth already had a well developed relationship with a church building, they did not consider it to be a necessary part of what makes a good place to live. Instead, they identified friendliness of their area, being satisfied with their own homes and proximity to leisure activities, cinemas and shops as being more important. The study also demonstrated that the youth felt that it was more important to live somewhere attractive rather than historic. What they considered to be attractive in the built environment was not questioned further during the workshops; however it was evident that ‘historic buildings’ are not necessarily considered attractive.

The term ‘old building’ was generally used in discussions during the workshops by the youth participants in a negative context where as the terms ‘modern or new building’ appeared to be favored more positively. Due to time restrictions discussions did not develop these terms further however it was clear that a more modern building was associated with materials such as glass.

Another interesting finding was that living close to green space was classified as unimportant by 72% of participants. No links were established between proximity to the building and satisfaction with living area. The majority of respondents felt satisfied with the area in which they lived, generally classifying the area they lived as a modern area. It has become clear through the investigation that buildings of importance to this age group are those which provide a function they can respond to such as supermarkets, cinemas, shops and those buildings that provide other leisure type activities. The study did draw connections with previous research by McPhillips & Russell (2011) in terms of the influence of symbology, objects and text.

The youth demonstrated a clear understanding of religious symbology through their expectation drawings. However unlike the previous study, the youths attempted to acknowledge and retain some elements of the churches architectural form when considering options for re-use.

The history of the church was important to the youths with the majority feeling that the story of its development should be captured in the new use of the building. The story was regarded as interesting and enjoyable. The fact that it was associated with the Methodist faith did not seem to be an issue to any of the youth involved in the workshops in terms of their identity. This suggests that through the story of Carlisle Memorial Church, the youth developed a curiosity and sympathy with the buildings demise. Unlike previous research by McPhillips and Russell (2011) spatial experience was not conducted through a physical walkabout tour of the building however the revised methodological approach of a photographic based workshops also appeared to provide an effective method for engaging youth in the local built environment.

Whilst this study was limited in terms of size and scope, a number of interesting issues have been highlighted for further development. Similar education based workshops would be useful in helping to improve youth engagement with their local environment and connection to other historic buildings. In line with research by Spennemann (2006) there is still a need for public education to the next generation and cultural heritage must have a firm place in the school curriculum. The need for this is also evidenced by the fact that 82% of participants from this study had not visited a historic building within the past year and 78% stated that they did not hold an interest in the history of their area.

In summary the project has shown that young people have a better attachment to a building when they have had a personal experience or connection to it. When a building is disused this connection is less likely to occur. Youth can, however develop a connection through an appreciation or understanding of a buildings apologue. They must however be able to connect to the story and in the case of Carlisle Memorial Church this was possibly achieved through the family focus story. The knowledge of the local area was limited and interest in local history lacking by the youths involved in the workshops. The youths did however demonstrate a respect for Carlisle Memorial Church once they connected to its story. This was evidenced through their ‘re-use’ drawings and desire to maintain awareness of the Carlisle family and the buildings history. The youths felt the story would certainly be of interest to local people as well as tourists.

In summary the project has shown that young people have a better attachment to a building when they have had a personal experience or connection to it.

Youth aged 11-14 also appear to connect better to buildings that provide them with a sense of security or entertainment function ie. home, shops and cinema. Religious building are not necessarily considered a key part of what makes an area a good place to live unless that person already has an established relationship with that type of building ie. regular church attendance.

From a youth perspective re-use options for Carlisle Memorial Church should consider the historical development of the church and incorporate the story of the Carlisle Family. The building would serve the community best as a shared multi-functional resource that could be used by adults and teenage youth. The building facade should also be maintained to ensure respect for the churches history. In order to develop an internationally relevant best practice model for the reuse of historic buildings in contested urban space, youth opinions should certainly be explored and considered further.

Recommendations for further investigation include:

- The use of further drawing based education workshops to a wider youth audience in differing schools and locations in the City of Belfast to encourage positive engagement with historical buildings.
- The use of a case study building which can be visited for a walkabout tour as part of the workshops to further enhance the methodology and aspects of youth engagement.
- Workshops with longer duration. One of the limitations of the workshops for this study was that working within a school environment meant restrictions in terms of class time.
- The design and implementation of cultural heritage lessons into local schools to improve appreciation and knowledge of the local built environment.
- In a broader context, further research is needed into the development of strategic policies focusing on the preservation of architectural heritage in divided or tensioned societies.
- The impact of disused space on place attachment and identity of local communities could also be developed further to incorporate perceptions from differing age groups.
- Finally, the development of design guidance statements which could aid the challenge facing the re-use of significant architectural heritage buildings.

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Appendix 1: Financial Summary

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Expenditure Item	Cost (£) Amount awarded (£6000)
Photography	1200
Workshop Equipment	400
Exhibition (design and printing)	3500
Publishing and printing booklets for exhibition promotion	500
Exhibition space hire	400
Total spend	6000

Figure 1 Carlisle Memorial Church 1946 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 2 The School Building 1896 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 3 James Carlisle (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 4 Belfast Map 1830 (Copyright 2003 Royal Irish Academy)

Figure 5 Belfast Map 2005 (Copyright Irish Historic Town Atlas 2005)

Figure 6 William Lynn (Architect) (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 7 Reverend Joseph McKay, First Minister of the church 1876-1879 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 8 Hymn sheet used at first church service (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 9 The Chancel 1985 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 10 Church Interior 1896 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 11 The Chancel from Transept 1896 (Courtesy of Glenravel Project, 2012)

Figure 12 Church Interior (2011)

Figure 13 Text remaining in Chancel

Figure 14 Chancel Roof

Figure 15 Original window

Figure 16 Organ Pipes

Figure 17 & 18 Porch Architectural Detailing

Figure 19 Porch Window

Figure 20 Location of Brass Tablets

Figure 21 Final stone

Figure 22 Rose Window

Figure 23 Fading sandstone dressings

Figure 24 Internal Damage

Figure 25 Column deterioration

Figure 26 Workshop photograph (1)

Figure 27 Workshop photograph (2)

Figure 28 Workshop photograph (3)

Figure 29 Importance rating of factors making an areas a good place to live

Figure 30 Youth Re-Use Options for Carlisle Memorial Church

Figure 31 Expectation drawing of a church

Figure 32 Expectation drawing showing stonework

Figure 33 Expectation drawing showing entrance

Figure 34 Expectation drawing showing car parking

Figure 35 Expectation drawing showing Biblical references

Figure 36 Reuse Option ‘McDonalds’

Figure 37 Reuse Option ‘Cinema’

Figure 38 Reuse Option ‘Dance Hall’

Figure 39 Reuse Option ‘Community Youth Centre’

Figure 40 Reuse Option ‘Mixed use with commemoration area’

Figure 41 Reuse Option ‘Gymnasium’

Figure 42 Reuse Option ‘Dinosaur Museum’

Figure 43 Reuse Option ‘Art and music centre’

Figure 44 Reuse Option ‘Gymnasium with shop’

Figure 45 Reuse Option ‘ Restore as a church’

Figure 46 Written Reuse Option

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